UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
6th meeting
held on
Monday, 11 October 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/48/SR.6
26 October 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. FERNANDEZ DE COSSIO (Cuba) expressed disappointment that, three years after the adoption of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, its goals were still far from being achieved, particularly accelerated development in the developing countries, strengthened international cooperation and a significant improvement in the human condition in the developing countries. In its fourth decade of attempting to overcome structural underdevelopment, the Second Committee was still sacrificing a realistic approach and the satisfaction of pressing needs to a desire for consensus. At the same time, the Group of 77, which promoted bold initiatives year after year, saw its efforts thwarted by the refusal to implement specific, practical measures to change the existing international order. Nor had the response been great to the Colombian representative's appeal, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, for balance between United Nations activities for peace and security and its obligations regarding cooperation for development. Even more alarming was the fact that the Organization's programme and budget processes were advanced as pretexts for relegating development initiatives even further into the background.

2. The United Nations must play a stronger role in resolving the greatest threats to mankind. The number of deaths among third world children under five years of age over an 18-month period was higher than all the casualties of war and conflict since the establishment of the Organization. Approximately 42 million children under 5 years of age had died since the beginning of the fourth International Development Strategy. It was therefore inconceivable that the Organization should place such emphasis on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and other concepts that drew considerable resources away from developing countries and provided employment for national armed forces but did nothing to stop avoidable death and suffering in the third world.

3. Cuba endorsed the idea of an agenda for development, and believed that its fundamental aim should be to find ways and means of implementing already existing instruments on international cooperation and strengthening the role of the United Nations in that area. It was to be hoped that industrialized countries would become more aware of development problems and take action to bring about a truly just international order, rather than the spurious one that had emerged from the end of the cold war and had brought third world countries neither benefits nor hope. Underdevelopment would not be corrected by solutions thought up at European and North American universities, by ambassadors representing the Secretary-General and, least of all, by military operations that distributed food at gunpoint - the plight of Somalia was demonstrating that it was easier to kill the hungry than to eliminate hunger. The answer lay in addressing key issues, such as unequal terms of trade, external debt and the monopolization of commodity prices, and in implementing a development programme that sought to promote equity in education, health and other social areas. Moreover, development must be sustainable, and, as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had stressed, consumption patterns in the industrialized world and poverty in the underdeveloped world could not continue if that objective was to be achieved.

(Mr. Fernandez de Cossio, Cuba)

4. Cuba, a small, underdeveloped third world country, was in an especially difficult economic situation. In 1993, the loss of trading partners in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and the economic embargo imposed by the United States of America had been compounded by climatic phenomena and a rare epidemic which had taken a huge toll in lives and resources. The only element that was not beyond control was the United States embargo in effect for more than 30 years, which cut off Cuba's commercial relations not only with United States entities and citizens but also with a sizeable group of countries whose rights had also been infringed on. That was yet another example of how vulnerable the developing countries were in an unjust and inequitable system of international economic relations. In conclusion, his delegation fully supported the statement issued by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 on 5 October and the opening statement delivered by the Chairman of the Second Committee.

5. Mr. GOUDYMA (Ukraine) said that in view of the growing importance of development issues, recognized in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/48/1, paras. 4 and 7), there must be closer coordination between the Organization's social and economic activities and its humanitarian and peace-keeping activities. The agenda for development being prepared by the Secretary-General would provide a conceptual framework for strengthening the role of the United Nations in facilitating international economic cooperation. It would also intensify relations between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, without any ideological constraints. Ukraine shared the view of those delegations which believed that an agenda for development should reflect up-to-date trends in socio-economic development and should be of practical value. United Nations activities in the economic and social sectors should take into account the interests of the Central and Eastern European countries, whose transition to a market economy had proved to be far more difficult than imagined. According to the World Economic Survey 1993, the standard of living in those economies had plunged since 1989, and per capita output had fallen by almost one third in the States of the former Soviet Union.

6. Ukraine was deep in the throes of an economic and energy crisis. Decades of a command economic and administrative system had left it with an unsound management model, an imbalanced economic structure, severe ecological problems and depleted natural resources. It could no longer use the gold and hard-currency reserves of the former Soviet Union, was faced with overwhelming expenses in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster and had suffered losses as a result of the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the former Yugoslavia. Ukraine was determined to make the transition to a State which guaranteed political, economic and ideological diversity, human rights, the revival of national culture and equality of ownership and management, but had already made mistakes in that long, arduous process. It had been slow to implement integrated socio-economic change because its authorities had not yet managed to propose an economic reform programme or a national economic model aimed at satisfying basic human needs, and there had been little teamwork among government officials.

(Mr. Goudyma, Ukraine)

7. Ukraine believed that its economic stability was directly related to the renewal of severed economic ties and mutually advantageous cooperation with all the States established in the territory of the former Soviet Union. Categorically opposed to the policies of economic pressure and blackmail, it favoured the development of rational economic ties between enterprises and the removal of artificial barriers to that end. Ukraine wished to enjoy mutually beneficial economic relations with its neighbours within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States but did not believe that the Commonwealth should become a super-State structure. It would not be a party to any agreement or union infringing on its own national and economic sovereignty. It had not signed the Treaty on the Establishment of the International Economic Community (Commonwealth of Independent States) but had declared its intention to become an associate member. Recognizing that cooperative global integration was imperative, as in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/48/1, para. 13), Ukraine hoped to integrate its economy gradually into the European and world economy. In that spirit, it had become a member of international financial institutions and an associate member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and it hoped for the successful outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. It also participated in projects within the framework of European and Black Sea cooperation.

8. Ukraine attached great importance to General Assembly resolution 47/187 on integration of the economies in transition into the world economy. United Nations activities in the economic and social sectors could help Ukraine to resolve a number of its problems. It hoped that United Nations assistance would be substantive - not merely technical - and would promote foreign investment in the Ukrainian economy under the favourable conditions offered by its national legislation. The creation of an internal market and the development of foreign trade would also be vital. Ukraine had taken a number of measures in order to broaden its national export capabilities and develop bilateral trade and economic ties with other countries. It would benefit greatly from the opening of new credit lines; from external assistance to the implementation of economic reforms, in particular, of its banking and finance systems; and from the assistance of international financial institutions in establishing a small, private fund to promote business and foreign investment.

9. The establishment of integrated United Nations interim offices was an issue that had become overpoliticized, and yet a new model for ensuring a United Nations presence in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States was fully consistent with the provisions of resolution 47/199. An integrated office would be of great value in Ukraine. The main purpose of the interim offices should be to carry out operational activities. Other functions could be assigned to them with the agreement of the host country.

10. His delegation attached great importance to expanded United Nations activities to promote international cooperation to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. Such activities seemed to have lost momentum, until the Secretary-General's recent appointment of a Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl. His delegation hoped that the new Coordinator's efforts would be supported by the programmes and projects of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

11. Mr. PRONK (Netherlands) noted that, after the transforming events of 1989, the world was in a period of transition, fraught with contradictions. On the one hand, it was becoming increasingly interdependent as goods, services and people, including refugees, moved across borders. On the other hand, States were being fragmented by ethnic and religious strife and micro-nationalist movements. International cooperation was increasing, but the United Nations was hampered by a lack of collective will, organizing power and financial means. Regional cooperation and integration were on the increase, but there was a risk that, in adverse conditions, they could lead to the emergence of fiercely competing, even hostile blocs. The outcome of the Uruguay Round was thus even more crucial. Against that backdrop, development and underdevelopment had acquired new meanings as well. A number of developing countries were becoming dynamic forces in the world economy even as former communist countries were in the process of a fragile socio-economic transformation and the industrialized countries were deep in recession.

12. In the meantime, poverty remained very high in absolute terms, particularly in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of impoverished women was rising. Lately, however, inequality and poverty had become increasingly transnational phenomena, as illustrated by the spread of poverty-related diseases, such as tuberculosis, diphtheria and malaria; poverty-related migration; and world-wide unemployment. There were more poor people in rich countries and a larger middle class in many poor countries. Whereas, at the beginning of the twentieth century, exploitation had been the chief cause of inequality and poverty, the causes of marginalization and poverty at the end of the century were exclusion and neglect. A strategy for social integration was needed in order to deal with exclusion from markets, access to resources and economic, social and political rights.

13. The World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995, would provide an excellent opportunity for building a global consensus on social integration. First of all, the concept of development itself must be redefined in order to correct the problems of ecological and political exclusion from the development process. As pointed out by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, an increasing proportion of the world's population was marginalized from the world's ecosystem, without any means of protecting its water, air and land resources. Such exclusion must be rectified by reducing material consumption in richer countries, redistributing natural wealth between rich and poor and reducing natural population growth. In that connection, the decisions taken at the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994, would have a momentous impact on the population policy of the twenty-first century.

14. Political exclusion must be addressed not only by recognizing the close connection between conflict and development, but also by integrating the protection of cultural rights into the concept of development. Encouragement of mutual respect and communication among peoples of different backgrounds would be one means of preventing non-economic, e.g. culturally motivated, conflicts. Sustainable development also depended on the existence of a political order which guaranteed the participation and empowerment of all peoples, including freedom of expression and assembly. Development and peace were indivisible, as illustrated by the fact that economic assistance often facilitated compromise between warring factions, helped to rehabilitate war-torn economies and

(Mr. Pronk, Netherlands)

prevented conflicts from escalating through support to the establishment of a democratic society.

15. Development and peace were indivisible. Now that East and West finally had begun drastically to reduce their armaments, arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament should also become priorities for the South. That would help lessen tensions between and within countries and would free resources for development. Countries of the North should convert military assistance into economic assistance, slow down the arms trade, decrease subsidies for military exports and make military debts transparent.

16. The Security Council should consider inviting the Economic and Social Council to report to it on trends in social, economic and environmental areas which, unless mitigated, might constitute threats to international peace and security. That would require more flexibility in the Economic and Social Council's working procedures and modalities.

17. His delegation fully supported the steps taken thus far by the Secretary-General to restructure the United Nations system in order to eliminate overlaps in the mandates and activities of various components of the system. The effects of their implementation should be closely monitored and further adjustments should be made where necessary. Member States must not allow discussions on the reform of the intergovernmental machinery to drag on. States also should accept a fully unified United Nations presence in the field, for failure to do so would further marginalize the role of the United Nations in development.

18. Agenda 21 provided an integrated approach to development that had been accepted at the highest political level, and there was no need for a further comprehensive, negotiated document. It was now time to translate Agenda 21 and other basic documents into concise guidelines for the United Nations system in the field of development. The proposed agenda for development could provide those guidelines.

19. The fight against poverty remained the international community's most urgent task. While much had been achieved, many countries still lacked a domestic policy aimed at consciously fighting poverty, and the current international economic environment was not conducive to supporting such policies.

20. The scope for official financial flows broadened as the world's understanding of interdependence grew. The need for resources also increased. Although budgetary constraints had compelled his Government to decrease its level of development assistance during the current year, he was pleased to announce that its aid budget in 1994 would be higher than the 1993 figure. It was also encouraging to note that some developing countries which had made substantial progress in their economic development might be in a position to devote more resources to their own development and even become donors of aid. The concept of official development assistance must be refined to encompass aid to some poorer countries, such as those on the southern rim of the former Eastern bloc, which were transforming their economic and political systems. The increasing links between poverty, transition, environment, migration and peace also must be reflected in a new definition of "aid".

(Mr. Pronk, Netherlands)

21. Lastly, he said that obstacles to an integrated approach to development must be eliminated in order to meet modern global challenges.

22. Mr. VALENZUELA (Honduras) said that the desire of the developing countries to enhance the quality of life of their inhabitants should be a shared international effort and should result in vocational training and guaranteed improved access to the opportunities afforded by expanding open economies. The protectionist measures imposed by some States on traditional exports from Latin America ran counter to the open multilateral trading system that was essential for the growth of world trade and the economic development of all countries. It was therefore imperative to bring the Uruguay Round to a satisfactory conclusion. Failure to do so would have serious consequences for world trade, for the expectations of the developing countries and for the structural programmes which many of them wee introducing at great sacrifice.

23. It was also necessary to increase technology transfers in order to promote industrial development and to introduce more flexibility in the financing of industrial parks in the developing countries.

24. Lastly, he noted that the decline in the prices of primary commodities during the past year had had a serious impact on the economies of the developing countries, and he therefore underscored the need for improved access to international markets at fair prices.

25. Mr. MARKER (Pakistan) said that the impact of the recession had been felt most sharply in the developing countries, particularly those with the most vulnerable economies. Since 1945, the international community had pursued the development of the developing countries through three principal instruments: access to finance, access to markets and access to the technology and skills required for development. Unfortunately, such access had always been unequal. In the area of trade, for example, irrational arrangements for international trade in textiles, agriculture, steel, automobiles, electronics and a growing number of other products continued because vested interests had successfully resisted genuine liberalization. The priorities and interests of the developing countries had figured marginally in the Uruguay Round, even in such areas as textiles and agriculture. There was a danger that the establishment of regional trading blocs might exclude many developing countries from preferential access to the markets of the developed countries.

26. Although financial flows to developing countries had improved during the past year in macroeconomic terms, the needs of many of the poorest countries must be addressed more vigorously. Impediments to technology transfers to developing countries also were multiplying, and the approach to the issue was often arbitrary, discriminatory and detrimental to the goals of development cooperation and economic progress.

27. Despite the clear commitment to address the issues of poverty and development made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, no additional resources had been pledged. It was to be hoped that the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development would evoke a global commitment to action to cope with the population problem through economic growth, education and human development.

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

28. The poorest countries had been plunged into desperation by the economic recession of the past few years, and there was a danger that entire countries and communities could collapse, as the situation in Somalia indicated. The world already confronted too many conflicts, and could not afford such a political breakdown in the third world.

29. It was time to build a new "consensus" for development which responded to the imposing challenges but also seized new opportunities for international economic cooperation. The nations of the world shared a common commitment to the ideals of free market economics and democratic politics, and the world community had acquired the capability and experience to bring its combined expertise to bear when addressing the gravest consequences of poverty. Above all, modern technology offered new answers to the problems of poverty, pollution and social organization.

30. Discussions on the proposed agenda for development would provide the opportunity to evolve a new consensus which could include, inter alia, an agreement for the establishment of a global economy based on the principle of competitive advantage which encouraged the progressive integration of the developing countries into the system of world trade and finance. Secondly, the consensus should incorporate an agreement to create a non-discriminatory world trading system based on equal opportunities for all States, the progressive elimination of protectionist measures, and preferential treatment for the more disadvantaged States for transitional periods. Thirdly, world financial arrangements should offer greater equity in the distribution of international liquidity to all countries and significantly enhance development finance. Greater cooperation between the United Nations and the international financial institutions was essential to that end. Fourthly, the transfer and application of modern technologies for economic and social development should be intensified, and problems relating to weapons proliferation should be dealt with on a cooperative and non-discriminatory basis. Fifthly, agreement should be reached to fulfil the global commitments entered into in various forums on ways and means of addressing such global issues as the environment, food production, trade, social development and population. Lastly, it was necessary to define the role of the United Nations in the formulation of such an agenda and in the coordination and harmonization of action to attain the goals set out in it.

31. Mrs. FRECHETTE (Canada) said that it was time to find pragmatic and innovative formulas for translating into reality the commitments undertaken at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development with regard to the environment and sustainable development and to prove wrong those who claimed that the United Nations was already the prisoner of a new bureaucracy. Her delegation attached high priority to the conclusion during the coming year of negotiations on desertification, the sustainable development of small island developing States, and straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. The state of the fish stocks off her country's Atlantic coast was becoming increasingly alarming. Only an agreement to regulate fishing on the high seas that was legally binding on all the parties concerned could solve a problem which threatened all the world's seas. Her delegation also looked forward to a dialogue which would turn the principles adopted at Rio with regard to forests into practical measures for cooperation. The fact that she had singled out

(Mrs. Frechette, Canada)

certain issues did not in any way diminish the importance which her delegation attached to the implementation of all of Agenda 21.

32. Her delegation hoped that a spirit of cooperation would continue to inspire efforts to restructure and revitalize the Economic and Social Council. The credibility, relevance and dynamism of the United Nations development system depended on that. The efforts of the Nordic delegations in that sphere were a source of inspiration. It was imperative to resolve, to the satisfaction of all, any remaining areas of disagreement and to adopt the relevant draft resolution by consensus. The measures to be contained in the draft resolution would facilitate the process of restructuring and revitalizing the Council. It also was necessary to enable the Council fully to carry out the role assigned to it.

33. With regard to operational activities, the rigorous implementation of directives adopted at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly with respect to the strengthening of the role of the resident coordinator, the elaboration of country strategy notes and the elimination of duplication, would reinforce the capacity of the United Nations development system to address the pressing problems confronting the developing countries in a coherent, rational and effective manner, and would maximize the impact of available resources.

34. With regard to the question of interim offices, her delegation underscored the need for cost-efficiency, the elimination of duplication and the effective functioning of the United Nations development system in the field. If agreement was reached on those objectives, it should be possible to define the mandate and functions of integrated United Nations offices for the benefit of the Member States served by them.

35. With regard to the role and functioning of the World Food Council, it was imperative to put world food security issues back in perspective and to refocus attention on them in the light of current realities and evolving concepts of development. Her delegation hoped that the recommendation that the World Food Council should be maintained as a distinct ministerial body would provide new opportunities for reconciling existing diverging views and that a consensus could be reached, with a view to taking a decision on the future of the Council during the current session of the General Assembly.

36. The reform and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors would not alone ensure that the United Nations could meet the challenges posed by a changing geopolitical panorama and profound socio-economic transformations. While the United Nations was a less marginal actor in the face of current challenges than some maintained, it was no less true that its actions remained scattered and that it continued to expend resources and energies in enterprises which no longer had a reason to exist.

37. It was time to rethink concepts of development and adapt cooperation to new requirements. Her delegation therefore warmly welcomed the initiative to develop an agenda for development. The Secretary-General should not hesitate to question the concepts, methods and structures which for so long had provided the framework for United Nations actions. He should propose a global and integrated vision out of which the nascent idea of sustainable human development should

(Mrs. Frechette, Canada)

emerge with greater clarity. The agenda should mobilize international cooperation around clear priorities and a more rational division of responsibility among the various development institutions. Her delegation intended to contribute to the discussion on the proposed agenda at the current session.

38. Mr. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) said that although international détente provided signs of positive political change in the world, the economic and social challenges facing the developing countries were a threat to peace and security. Political, economic, social and cultural conflicts in various parts of the world underscored the interdependence of peace, development and democracy. Those goals must continue to be the primary focus of the United Nations.

39. Changes within his country during the past three years reflected the aspirations of the people for a democratic society in which fundamental freedoms and social justice prevailed. While there had been no major upheavals, economic activity had slowed down. His country deeply appreciated the assistance provided by the international community during that critical stage.

40. In order to preserve and consolidate the political gains achieved thus far, his Government must be in a position to ensure that the fundamental needs of the population were met and that its purchasing power increased rapidly. To that end, a programme of reforms would be undertaken to revitalize the economy, taking into account the social and ecological dimensions of development. Innovative legislation would be adopted with a view to developing human resources, promoting private initiative, entrepreneurship and competitiveness, introducing more liberal trade and exchange mechanisms, and promoting exports and foreign investment.

41. The Government would formulate clear guidelines for production and investment in order to guarantee essential political support for the effective implementation of the programme. It urged its development partners to give their full support to the restructuring. Liberalization measures would give its economy greater flexibility in order to capitalize on comparative advantage, and his Government therefore looked forward to the swift and successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

42. The success and durability of structural adjustment programmes depended greatly on external factors, and the negative effects of exchange and interest rate fluctuations and the severe drop in commodity prices and terms of trade remained a cause for concern. Africa, which included over half of the least developed countries, deserved particular attention. The implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s had become extremely urgent. His delegation also attached great importance to the preparations for the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development.

43. In spite of recent commitments in the area of international cooperation for development, there was an apparent decline in the spirit of cooperation, as evidenced by the adoption of protectionist policies and a reduction in resources

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

and effort allocated to development programmes and problems such as the external debt crisis. The United Nations had a fundamental role to play in promoting international cooperation, because its principles of universality and sovereign equality provided a global, integrated perspective on those problems. The restructuring and revitalization of the economic and social sectors should strengthen its role in addressing international economic issues. His Government adhered strongly to the principles of democratization and transparency in national government, which were not incompatible with the concern for efficiency. It supported efforts to coordinate the activities and policies of international financial, monetary and commercial institutions with those of the United Nations system.

44. Mr. SINGH (Fiji) said that his delegation had participated in the Preparatory Committee for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and was pleased with the progress made. Agreement had been reached on several aspects of the draft programme of action but the sections dealing with implementation and monitoring were still to be decided. Those extremely critical aspects of the programme must receive the greatest possible attention from the Preparatory Committee. Therefore, his delegation supported the proposal for a resumed session of the Preparatory Committee to be held before April 1994 in order to reach agreement on the programme of action. The Preparatory Committee had established a case for the unique problems of small island developing States related to size, isolation and environmental vulnerability. It was critically important that a specific international mechanism should be established within the United Nations to respond to those needs and to monitor implementation of the programme of action. Moreover, high priority should be given to the establishment of focal points within all specialized agencies with expertise and responsibility for implementation of particular areas of the programme of action.

45. Turning to the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in 1994, he noted that Fiji had had a very successful population programme since the early 1970s, with particular emphasis on health and family planning. It recognized the linkages among population growth, environment and sustainable development. Fiji therefore supported the Conference's objectives, and hoped that it would address population programmes in the context of wider development issues. A process of consultation and dialogue on the complex and highly sensitive issues to be dealt with would assist greatly in the implementation of the outcome of the Conference.

46. His delegation looked forward to a frank exchange of views on the report of the Secretary-General on an agenda for development. That report must take into account the concerns of all countries, including small island countries, set the guidelines for future United Nations action in the economic and social fields and identify the organization which would take the lead in its implementation. His delegation also supported the recent initiative by Papua New Guinea for a comprehensive and systematic study of the opportunities for participation in the economies of developing countries, which would complement the Secretary-General's report and identify ways to create and maintain such opportunities.

(Mr. Singh, Fiji)

47. As a universal forum for objectively reviewing the world economy, the Second Committee must continue to analyse the implications of policy options for Member States and, through the machinery of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, assist them in reaching agreement on broad objectives and general policy guidelines for member Governments, international financial organizations and regional organizations.

48. Mr. BUTLER (Australia) said that reform of the work of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors was needed more than ever before because of the urgent need to promote economic development, alleviate poverty and deliver international humanitarian assistance. Recently, major efforts had been focused on peace-keeping and international peace and security, but equal focus was needed on providing a decent standard of living for the peoples of the world. The new concept of sustainable development must be incorporated into the agenda of the United Nations without abrogating the fundamental development priorities of developing countries. Because the global economic recession was limiting resources for development, better use must be made of existing multilateral resources and more efficient working methods must be employed to achieve better results.

49. The package on the reform of the economic and social sectors before the Committee at the current session represented the end of an intensive process spanning more than two years which had involved an analysis of the need to revitalize the Economic and Social Council, operational agencies and the Second Committee, complemented by lengthy and complex negotiations. Yet that package had not yet been completed, and many delegations had expressed the view that it fell short of expectation in some areas. From an historical perspective, the reform exercise represented significant progress towards change after years of stagnation. The negotiation process was just a beginning, however; the reform package must be adopted before the end of the session. The package represented an outstanding piece of work by all contributors, and only a few details relating to the size and functioning of the executive boards of the funds and programmes remained to be resolved. Given its extreme importance, a satisfactory means to achieve consensus must be found, so that the international community could then look forward to the possibility of addressing issues of real importance through the multilateral bodies.

50. Without the reform, the urgent needs of Member States, particularly those of developing countries, would increasingly outstrip the Organization's ability to meet them. If matters could be set right on the economic and social side as well as the peace-keeping side, however, the current session would be viewed as truly remarkable.

51. Mr. BENSHABAN (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation supported the statement of the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77. The end of the cold war had opened up new vistas for international cooperation and development, as well as political changes which would favour peace and security and prosperity and progress. There was an urgent need to redirect resources from military to civilian uses. According to the World Economic Survey 1993, stagnation was prevalent in many parts of the world. The high social costs of improved economic performance had affected many developing countries, aggravating the phenomena of poverty, unemployment and flows of

(Mr. Benshaban, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

refugees, displaced persons and forced migrants, as well as engendering chronic structural imbalances, above all in Africa, where poverty, underdevelopment, the harshness of natural conditions, and indebtedness were particularly acute.

52. The development efforts of the developing countries were being thwarted by the reverse flow of resources, the decline in basic commodity prices, the industrial protectionism of the developed countries and the obstruction of the transfer of technology. There was therefore an urgent need for an open, transparent, regulated and non-discriminatory international trade system; consequently, he called for a rapid and successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. He also stressed the importance of cooperation among developing countries and the revival of the North-South dialogue, which had suffered from a lack of political will on the part of the advanced countries and from insignificant progress on the establishment of a just international economic order, despite important initiatives over the previous two decades taken by the special sessions of the General Assembly and multilateral conferences.

53. The imposition by certain advanced countries of economic blockades and trade restrictions on a number of developing countries and the freezing of their assets hampered those countries' economic and social development, thereby adversely affecting the world economy. Such practices were, moreover, contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. He drew particular attention to the iniquitous sanctions imposed on his own country, which had harmed the economy and large segments of the population, as substantiated most recently in document S/26139.

54. The international community must take urgent measures to reverse the negative flow of resources. The advanced countries should meet their targets for contributions to official development assistance (ODA) of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP), give the developing countries greater opportunities to acquire advanced technology under equitable conditions and, in general, support development in the developing countries in accordance with, in particular, Agenda 21.

55. His country attached particular importance to protection of the environment. It had undertaken the Great Man-Made River Project, which carried water from the south to the north to aid land reclamation and new settlements. However, efforts had been hampered by the presence of unexploded mines and matériel from the Second World War. He called for implementation of the numerous international and regional resolutions urging the countries responsible to provide the necessary information and technical assistance to remove such debris and to pay compensation for the damage caused by it.

56. The restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields must be based on the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter, which consecrated the international character of the United Nations, equality among nations with respect to the adoption of resolutions and fair geographical representation in the composition of the various executive bodies.

(Mr. Benshaban, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

57. He welcomed the convening of the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo in 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995 and the World Summit for Social Development in Denmark, also in 1995. Thorough preparation of those conferences would provide a strong political impetus for the adoption of a global approach to economic and social problems in the world.

58. Mr. BURAVKIN (Belarus) said that, although the end of the era of global confrontation had offered the prospect of a new world order, the international situation was far from optimistic. The conflicts that had threatened international peace and security had given way to local and internal conflicts that continued to occupy Governments' attention and prevented productive resources from being used for immediate development needs. Moreover, the world economy remained sluggish. While the developing countries had registered comparatively high rates of economic growth, the economic situation in developed market-economy countries was marked by stagnation, and a dangerous decline continued in the countries with economies in transition.

59. One of the major causes of the adverse international economic situation was the reduction of military expenditure. While the reduction of military budgets was a direct result of the transition to a post-confrontational world order, it gave rise to serious problems, the solution of which required coordinated action by the world community.

60. During the first eight months of 1993, industrial production in Belarus had fallen by 15.6 per cent. In spite of the Government's efforts to stabilize the economy, the situation remained complex. The highly militarized industry of Belarus was in extremely difficult circumstances. The summer rains and floods had made it difficult to provide the population with foodstuffs, and industry with raw material. In spite of those obstacles, Belarus was proceeding with its transition to a market economy, and its Parliament and Government had undertaken the task of creating the necessary legal basis for that economic transition. So far, 192 State and municipal enterprises had been privatized. By the end of 1993, 25 per cent of all small-scale enterprises involved in trade and services and 15 per cent of medium and large enterprises would be in private hands. Unfortunately, practically no foreign investors were taking part in that process, and the Government of Belarus had very limited credit resources that could be used to support national private investors.

61. His Government was resolved to continue to improve the legal and organizational bases for foreign trade. Belarus had been one of the initiators of the economic union of the countries members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and had signed the pertinent treaty, which would promote economic and financial stabilization in the region. Such cooperation would further the consolidation of an economically powerful group of States that would gradually become integrated in European and world economic structures and become an increasingly important factor in world economic growth.

62. Measures must be taken to remove various trade restrictions imposed on States of Central and Eastern Europe. His delegation was pleased that the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives of the United States

(Mr. Buravkin, Belarus)

Congress had recently recommended the repeal of federal legislation containing discriminatory trade and economic measures affecting the former Soviet republics. He hoped that other countries would follow suit.

63. His delegation would vigorously support United Nations resolutions and decisions containing measures to support the new economic consensus of the countries members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. With the political support of all Member States, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) were providing sorely needed technical assistance, particularly for the mitigation of the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. In that regard, the United Nations/UNDP interim office in Minsk played a very useful and practical role. His delegation believed that the Secretariat should elaborate an integral concept of international assistance to countries in transition.

64. Belarus understood the serious difficulties experienced by the developing countries and, in particular, many African States. To turn a blind eye to the famine, disease, mass illiteracy and child mortality in those countries was immoral. His Government was convinced that the new world order must be based on a more equitable distribution of the world's goods. His delegation hoped that the World Summit on Social Development, the United Nations Conference on Population and Development and the Secretary-General's forthcoming report on an agenda for development would be a major contribution to the elaboration of a new vision of global social and economic cooperation.

65. Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua) said that, in rationalizing its work, the Committee should take care not to narrow its mandate or limit its important role. The fact that the agreements and historic commitments that had been reached over the years had not yet resulted in more effective or relevant actions or measures meant only that more political will was needed to ensure their full implementation.

66. One way of improving the work of the General Assembly was to consider carefully the real need for every report that was requested, since many documents provided little or no new information. His delegation was particularly interested in a schedule of work based more on action than rhetoric, while not eliminating substantive discussions of issues of vital interest to the developing world.

67. The Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" would have little effect without its companion document on an agenda for development. Efforts should be made not only to achieve coherence and coordination within the United Nations system but also to provide adequate solutions to problems of development with the assistance of multilateral financial institutions.

68. In spite of the major progress that had been achieved in the international political arena, the problem of external debt continued to contribute to poverty and underdevelopment. External debt also caused political instability and posed a major obstacle to the advancement of democracy in many developing countries. Nicaragua's own debt amounted to more than 45 times its annual exports, and

(Mr. Vilchez Asher, Nicaragua)

unless its debt burden was very substantially alleviated the economic and social reconstruction of the country would become impossible.

69. In the transition from a centralized to a market economy, his Government had succeeded in reversing the eight-year decline in GDP to attain a modest growth of 0.7 per cent, but its efforts had been hampered by natural disasters and the decline in international prices of Nicaragua's main exports. Under Nicaragua's structural adjustment programme, the State monopoly of various sectors of the national economy had been abolished, privatization was being promoted and the annual inflation rate had fallen to 4 per cent for the first five months of 1993. More than 200 of the former 351 State enterprises had been privatized, while the production of a number of major crops, commodity trade and construction were entirely in private hands. While the challenge of privatization would continue, Nicaragua also faced the major challenge of promoting greater international understanding of the exceptional nature of its case, as recognized by General Assembly resolution 47/118, the provisions of which should be applied as it continued the difficult task of consolidating peace and making the transition to democracy. The social costs of adjustment had led to instability, which made it increasingly important to speed economic growth. Accordingly, the terms of aid to Nicaragua needed to be made more flexible, and increased external resources were required. In that context, he reiterated his Government's gratitude for the generous aid already received from Governments, United Nations agencies and financial institutions.

70. Peace and development were indivisible and interrelated and the disparities between the developed North and the impoverished South could not continue indefinitely. His delegation fully supported the efforts of the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to expand the North-South dialogue. In order to bring about that dialogue, it was necessary to promote a gradual convergence and make use of all international instruments that had been adopted in recent years. At the same time, efforts should be made to reach substantive agreements at the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit on Social Development.

71. In order for the developing countries to maintain their rate of growth, the industrialized countries must liberalize trade. His delegation was therefore concerned at the intensification of trade barriers, particularly with respect to agricultural products, and looked forward to the successful outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

72. The effects of environmental pollution, which was principally due to the patterns of growth and consumption in the North, went beyond national frontiers. The countries of the North themselves suffered from the effects of environmental degradation, and they should acknowledge their responsibility to take measures to address the problem. The current session would provide a good opportunity to consider environmental problems, including the lack of sufficient financial resources, for the implementation of Agenda 21.

73. Mr. KARSLIOGLU (Turkey) said that the Committee should rationalize its work, concentrating on the solution of problems and taking concrete and decisive steps to alleviate their consequences. In particular, attention should be focused on the liberalization of world trade, the management of the debt crisis and the conservation of a sound environment.

74. His delegation attached great importance to concerted action at the global level to solve economic and social problems, and believed that a democratic society could thrive only in a peaceful environment and through cooperative partnership. Activities for development were just as important as peace-keeping operations; indeed, such activities, which included humanitarian assistance, constituted the foundation of peace and security.

75. Turkey welcomed the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The implementation of the goals of Agenda 21 would contribute to the protection of the environment for future generations. His delegation also attached great importance to the International Conference on Population and Development and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements.

76. Mr. CASSAR (Malta) said that, in an interrelated world, it would be presumptuous to expect an acceptable degree of development in the absence of a favourable international environment. In that regard, his delegation emphasized the importance of adopting an agenda for development.

77. In the light of the current international situation, Malta had consistently supported efforts to ensure respect for human rights and had supported the proposal to appoint a United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. However, the violation of the right to life and a decent living could undermine all other efforts to generate respect for human rights in their entirety. No one could overlook the fact that 1.1 billion people were still living in extreme poverty and that thousands of children died daily as a result of malnutrition and lack of adequate medical care. In addition, millions of refugees were still living in the hope of returning to their homes.

78. His delegation hoped that the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations would be concluded as soon as possible in order to create the positive trading relationship on which the economic progress of so many countries depended.

79. The implementation of Agenda 21 was of paramount importance. The effective follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development should ensure equitable and sustainable development. His delegation was convinced that the Commission on Sustainable Development could produce results that could pave the way for international cooperation on certain environmental issues that had a direct influence on the economies of a number of States.

80. The issue of population growth was becoming increasingly urgent. An increasing world population in a depressed economic environment would result in a decline in living standards. His delegation hoped that the International Conference on Population and Development would contribute to the solution of the social and economic problems caused by high population growth.

(Mr. Cassar, Malta)

81. The United Nations was the Organization most capable of addressing global issues, particularly those that enhanced international development cooperation. The Organization must therefore do everything within its means to live up to those expectations. In that regard, the Secretary-General's efforts to restructure the Secretariat and introduce greater efficiency were commendable. The Committee had its share of responsibility in that process, and it should ensure that quality prevailed over quantity during its deliberations.

82. Mr. ALIOU (Cameroon) said that the international economic environment was characterized by slow growth, excessive debt among developing countries and an increasingly pronounced marginalization of Africa. Realistic and durable solutions to those problems must be found. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had produced international solidarity in striving to promote sustainable development while ensuring sound environmental management. In response, Cameroon had accelerated the process of establishing a Ministry of the Environment and Forests. That new department, with UNDP assistance, was currently preparing a national environmental management plan, including the establishment of a national commission on sustainable development. While the establishment of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development was welcome, it was regrettable that major provisions of Agenda 21 relating to financial resources and transfer of technology had not raised much enthusiasm.

83. The debt burden was becoming increasingly severe for developing countries. Measures taken thus far had given certain beneficiaries some breathing room, but the solution to the debt problem must be comprehensive, covering all categories of debt and of debtors. Therefore, his delegation supported the call for an international conference on debt. A fruitful exchange among creditors and debtors could lead to a lasting solution which would undoubtedly contribute to revitalization of the economies of developing countries, particularly in Africa.

84. Implementation of the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/151 establishing the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was urgent. Despite those commitments, the financial resources necessary for the financing of African development were slow in coming, and the continent was still weighed down by the intolerable debt burden. Cameroon therefore appealed for the establishment of a fund to finance the development of Africa.

85. With regard to the restructuring of the economic, social and related sectors of the United Nations system, it was unfortunate that the issue of the composition of the UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA governing councils had not been resolved, and his delegation would join any effort towards consensus. Subsequent to the transfer of United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) headquarters to Geneva, his delegation awaited with interest the appointment of a liaison officer to coordinate training and research activities currently under way at headquarters.

86. Mr. DUNLAVEY (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, in his statement, the representative of Cuba had raised a number of points in explanation of his country's poor economic performance, among them the so-called economic embargo imposed by the United States. Yet it was the sovereign right of all Member States to determine with whom they would conduct economic relations. With regard to Cuba, the United States was in exercise of that sovereign right. Rather than attempting to score ideological points, the representative of Cuba should have sought ways of facilitating constructive debate.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.